



## BATIK DERMAYON: EXPRESSION OF FEMININITY IN NORTH COAST OF JAVA

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### KEYWORDS

*Dermayon batik*  
*Semiotics*  
*Javanese women*  
*Culture and meaning*  
*Crafter woman*  
*Indonesian culture*  
*Expression of femininity*

### ABSTRACT

*To date, Javanese-Indonesian coastal women have only been part of the batik craft industry, but their strategic roles and expressions have never been disclosed or cared. Whereas the feminine side and the aesthetic symbolic adaptation of Batik-crafter women are very important issues in the creation of the Indonesian cultural repertoire. This study succeeded in explaining the visual identity signs and aesthetic structures described by the community of the crafter woman in the Paoman Village, as well as revealing the meaning of the Indramayu written batik motif as a sign in coastal culture.*

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## 1. Introduction

Indonesia has a rich variety of cultures, including batik crafts. The identity of batik is the aesthetic element of decorative motifs (ornaments) that differ from one batik motif to another (Krisnawati et al., 2019). Various batik motif in each region is a form of cultural expression and reflection of society towards life. Batik motifs do not only describe shapes, lines, and colours in one visual composition, but also contain symbolic meanings and philosophical values (Darmaprawira, 2002; Kishore et al., 2013). The depiction of batik motifs expresses signs that means life reflection and the natural environment.

In one of the batik centers on the north coast of Java, precisely in the district of Indramayu, there are approximately 143 motifs called batik Dermayon<sup>1</sup> (Dekranasda, 2007). Batik Dermayon which are aged 200 to 300 years were studied and developed by women<sup>2</sup> (fisherman's wife) to fill her spare time while waiting for her husband working in the sea. Initially, this batik was introduced by Chinese traders in the northern coastal areas of Java (Dekranasda, 2007; Fadlia et al., 2020; Syamwil et al., 2019). Thus, women are the main product makers who play an important role in the batik development process, especially in Indramayu.

For women, crafting batik is a job that requires patience and thoroughness. It can't be done in a hurry to obtain smooth lines, shapes, and motifs. The subtlety of the lines and shapes of this motif reflects the emotional character of the crafters. Dermayon's theme and decorative motifs depict women's expressions that contain messages and reflections on life and the natural environment of the coast. Various batik motifs that visualize elements of organic forms of plants, fish, and birds, depicted through short-curved lines and bright colours and solid compositions, are some of the visual signs of feminism that are interesting to study further. Visual works that reflect the feminine nature of coastal women<sup>3</sup> this strengthens the resilience of the cultural identity of the Indonesian nation.

The dynamics of the Indramayu batik-crafter woman community life in current industrial development is another side that has not obtained much attention. So far, Indramayu women have only been part of the batik industry, but their strategic roles and expressions have never been expressed or cared for. Whereas the aesthetic adaptation of crafter woman (pekriya batik perempuan) is a very important issue in the creation of adequate artistic motifs (Triyanto et al., 2017). The value of the visual expression of batik has also not been understood in depth since coastal batik decorative motifs are still seen by the community as ordinary and meaningless, when compared to symbolic batik keraton.

Batik has become an indigenous cultural heritage of the archipelago that has been known for centuries by the public, even in 2003, UNESCO has determined that batik is an intangible cultural heritage of humanity (Intangible Cultural Heritage) from Indonesia (Wolor et al., 2021). On the other hand, the study of feminism has grown and is gaining worldwide attention today. Unfortunately, visual studies of batik crafts from a feminist point of view are still few found. There found only a study on the analysis of contemporary feminine style batik designs by batik-crafter women in the cities of Pekalongan, Semarang, and Solo (Sugiarto & Lestari, 2020). Research on Indramayu batik has been carried out by many groups. The latest study discusses the aesthetics of the Indramayu kluwung batik motif (Putra et al., 2021). However, studies of the cultural life of batik crafters, which mostly are women, have not been widely carried out. This research is a continuation of the author's research on the relationship and influence of the natural environment (geoculture) and socio-culture as the background of the life of the batik crafter on the coast of Indramayu.

The existence of the Dermayon batik motif can be seen as a form of female expression or femininity that developed in the Indramayu coastal cultural system and its geocultural environment. Research is

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<sup>1</sup> The word "Dermayon" comes from the word "dermayuan" which consists of "darma" and "ayu". This word is related to the word "harbour", a place around a coastal area that is used as a place for ships to dock, and "ayu" means beautiful, wonderful, or fertile (Tresnasih & dkk., 1995), and/or related to the name Dharma Ayu, a legendary figure who co-founded settlements in Cimanuk valley (Kasim, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> In this study, the word "women" (perempuan) is used as a cultural concept, referring to individuals and residents of the batik community who are in a coastal cultural environment. Women has long been used in Indonesia in the "First Women's Congress" in 1928 in Yogyakarta (Blackburn, 2007). In the Indonesian government, State Ministry for Women's Empowerment (since 2004) was previously named the State Minister for the Role of Women. The change in the word female (wanita) to woman (perempuan) is quite reasonable because of the change in meaning (Fakih, 2008; Jackson, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> The word "coastal" (pesisiran) is used in the context of cultural studies, which is a cultural area of the people who live in coastal areas (Thohir, 1999).

focused on form and subject matter<sup>4</sup> as a form of feminism expression of crafter women as illustrated through the visualization of the Dermayon batik motif produced by the coastal women's community in Paoman village, Indramayu district.

It is hoped that this research will be useful for introducing and enriching the concepts and theories of culture (Nusantara) in the international arena, since this proves the relationship or influence of the world view, cultural works, and geocultural environment on the behavior of crafter women which have not been explored much. In addition, this research can be used as a theoretical basis in gender studies, women's studies, and feminism based on local culture, it may contribute fundamental concepts as a basis for thinking in developing a creative economy and tourism based on women's culture and local wisdom to the world. Therefore, this study aims to explain the visual identity and aesthetic structure described by the community of crafter women in Paoman Indramayu village in Dermayon batik motifs, and reveal the meaning of Indramayu's batik motif as a sign in coastal culture as a form of expression for coastal women.

## **2. Methodology**

This study method used qualitative research methods since the data analyzed are: 1) material aspects of art (artifacts, works) of Dermayon batik crafts as having in material culture; 2) the behavior and way of life of crafter women batik who produce crafts as doing; and 3) values (meaning) expression of life as ideas or thinking (Miles & Huberman, 1994). To make it easier to explore the behavior and meaning of coastal culture in Dermayon batik, a case study was chosen as the method in this qualitative research (Yin, 2009). The complexity of the problem of batik craft research is closely related to aspects of coastal culture and women as the perpetrators. In addition, the Dermayon batik motif artifact also has a sign and meaning that ultimately urged this research to utilize ethnographic (cultural studies), aesthetic and semiotic methods. The participatory observation technique was applied to collect the views of the crafter community completely and realistically at site (Cascio et al., 2020; Hammer et al., 2017). To collect data, the researcher used the sociodrama technique where the researcher tries to become part of the batik-crafter community which are generally women. This strategy aimed to anticipate suspicions that can distance the researcher's relationship with the subject or informant (Sprague, 2005). All stages of the research were carried out for 1 (one) year in five workshops Paoman batik, including: Batik Silva, Batik Senang Hati, Paoman Art, Batik Bintang Arut, and Batik Surya.

Data collection technique that accompanied the observation was in-depth interview specifically to 15 batik-crafter women, and key informants who understand Dermayon batik motifs. Other subjects interviewed were 11 entrepreneurs, batik users, including 20 women who were shopping at three showrooms batik in Paoman Indramayu, Dekranasda (Regional National Crafts Council) Indramayu, and 4 Indramayu culturalists. Interviews were conducted to obtain main data about batik motifs, and supports regarding the development of the batik industry, the cultural life of the Indramayu people, especially in the Paoman village, and the development of batik motifs from the past until now (Sugiarto & Lestari, 2020). The visual data of Dermayon batik motifs that were collected and purchased from crafter women and batik entrepreneurs in Paoman, Indramayu Regency, amounted to 60 (sixty) batik cloths.

The data collected was analyzed through the stages of data reduction, data display, classification, validation and then verified. The final results of the data that have been classified and verified were then processed through data triangulation to obtain data reliability. The next process was data analysis through aesthetic studies to find visual identity (aesthetics), and semiotic studies to obtain the content and meaning of Dermayon batik decorative motifs as a unity of expository and descriptive writing (Rohidi, 2011).

Batik cloth made by a number of crafter women selected and collected to be documented by photographic techniques. Based on this photographic data, the researchers described and analyzed the aesthetics of each Dermayon decorative motif. The results of the visual description and analysis of decorative batik motifs then underlain the exploration of the content and coded meaning analyzed by

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<sup>4</sup> The word "subject matter" in general is often interpreted as the main issue, basic idea, or theme. The use of subject matter in the context of art is related to the theme or subject matter expressed by the artist. To avoid ambiguity in the meaning of the concept of art, the author uses the term subject matter.

semiotics perspective (Jackson, 1999). This semiotic analysis supported by oral sources data from crafter woman, entrepreneurs and Indramayu culturalist informants. The process required sharp interpretation and expository accuracy.

### 3. Result and Discussion

#### 3.1. Women's Expressions and Reflections of Coastal Cultural Life

Aesthetically, Indramayu batik motifs show the cultural expressions of the people who make them. This expression expressly shows a clear sign of the women who made it as a community coastal of Indramayu who lives on the north coast of Java. The writing of batik cloth has long been carried out by the women's community, and until now in the Paoman Indramayu village, women have become the dominant factor in the process of making batik.<sup>5</sup> (Gusti & Fitriani, 2021). The existence of crafts (especially batik) which have been going on for a long period of time, since the period of hunting and gathering, followed by sedentary and traditional life, to modern times and the global era are traces of the tradition of women in crafting art in Indonesia (Kusrianto, 2021).

Indramayu batik motifs created by the people of Paoman village have developed along with technological, economic, social and cultural developments. Its development can be observed in the diversity of decorative motifs, which was originally only in the forties, has now become three times more. This shows the attitude of the people of Indramayu which is dynamic and open to change. This dynamic and open cultural attitude of the Indramayu community is shown by modifications in the creation of batik motifs (Kim, 2013; Selamat, 2018). The development of this decorative motif resulted in subject matter varied motifs. This decorative motif variant is the result of women's creativity in enriching the Dermayon motif.

Women in Paoman Indramayu have long expressed their feelings about life and their outlook on life through the signs on the Dermayon batik motif. Signs have a broad meaning. Saussure explains the sign as a unit that cannot be separated from two things, signifier to explain a form or expression; and the signified to explain the concept or encoded meaning (Chandler, 2007; Piliang, 2003). Dermayon batik motif is a signifier that contains meaning to interpret culturally. The interpretation of meaning in this signifier is related to the view of life of the people who created it. This view of life includes the relationship between human beings, other creatures, and nature, as well as the relationship between humans and God.

Based on the views of cultural, aesthetic, and semiotic disciplines on various batik decorative motifs and the lives of women craftsmen of Dermayon batik which are associated with the cultural life of the people on the coast of Indramayu, especially in Paoman village, the Dermayon batik motif can be interpreted as a sign of women in expressing and reflecting their life in coastal culture. There are ten aspects of people's life as signs and forms of expression as a result of the meaning analysis of batik motifs aesthetics elements and the culture of the Paoman community:

##### 3.1.1. Expression of Harmony and Diversity

The Creation of batik art (craft) in Indonesia, including in Indramayu is the embodiment of harmony from crafter. Harmony is the idealism of living consciousness to maintain the balance of the micro-cosmos and macro-cosmos, when human intimate relationships, the social environment, and the universe are well maintained. In the Dermayon batik motif, for example, the harmony of nature is clearly reflected in the integrated depiction of the subject matter of flora, fauna, and nature (Brenner & Igamberdiev, 2021; Gustami, 2007).

The relationship between each other in the life of the Paoman community can be seen in mutual cooperation in making batik. Crafter women are able to gather their neighbors to work on batik orders. One group of women who work in a batik workshop consists of 3 to 5 people. When doing batik work, they seem diligent and patient. The expression on his face showed no complaints, anxiety, or fatigue. In

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<sup>5</sup> About 85% of batik crafter in Paoman Village are women, especially those who directly "make batik or write canting on mori cloth". Men are in charge of helping other batik processes, such as setting, colouring, and pelorodan.

the meantime, they talk to each other about everything, or quietly listen to Tarling's music<sup>6</sup> which is played loudly. This music is a sign that in the house there is a group of women doing batik (Kartomi, 2011).

### ***3.1.2. Expression of Togetherness and Openness***

Expression of women as a form of collective character seems to be expressed through their batik motifs for a long time. There is a feeling of "one fate" between them as fishermen's wives who were left by their husbands to go to sea. The connotation of togetherness can be observed as in the cauliflower vegetable motif.

Another expression of natural beauty can be observed in the motifs of wild plants which are considered by some to be unpretentious plants. For example, the motif ganggeng is inspired by algae that live in fresh or sea waters. These plants usually live wild or unmaintained. Algae motifs that seem flexible and rhythmic express the smooth and soft feeling of the woman who wrote them (Chicago & Lucie-Smith, 2000). Curved lines fill the entire cloth spaces, and no space is left blank indicating a free and emotional attitude. This can be observed from the way they speak in a loud voice, dare to express their opinion and are fluent like having no burden. To newcomers, this way of speaking looks like a quarrel, while they are actually just joking with serious expressions. This independent attitude of the coastal women of Indramayu is also seen in taking care of the household. Women left by their husbands to go to sea for more than a month, must be able to take a role as head of the family (male, in patriarchal culture)<sup>7</sup>.

The hot climate of Indramayu, and the work of batik have forged women and build their strong, tough, and independent character in their routine life (Mawaddah et al., 2021). The feeling of accepting sincerely and realistically that they have is also the teaching of their parents who have had a similar fate. There are independent attitudes and behaviors of Indramayu women who have grown since living in a coastal cultural environment (Nursito & Faeni, 2019).

In contrast to urban areas, the free attitude of coastal women is due to their roles and responsibilities in upholding life on land while their husbands work in the sea to earn a living as a fisherman. The roles of women and men remain equal in married life partners. Both are perfect and complement each other. Their togetherness contains similarities as well as differences that must be understood to enable them work together in harmony towards the ideals of humanity (Shihab, 2009; Siegelman et al., 2019).

### ***3.1.3. Expression of the Peripheral Community***

Flower suket is a type of grass that grows wild around the yard or garden. In general, people maintain beautiful ornamental plants as a form of objective beauty. The connotation of flower suket also means populist. The term grass is small and wild, often stepped on by humans, and is considered worthless, and helpless, so it appears in the common language "grassroots" (Emery, 2011). Another connotation of this motif is that the sign of coastal women in Paoman Indramayu conveys a message about their role in life as ordinary people, who do not have values to be proud of, but the existence of grass, like the existence of the people, is a small material created by God to be useful for others.

### ***3.1.4. Balance and Harmony (Natural harmonization of flora and fauna)***

Almost every flora motif (plants or flowers) in Dermayon batik motifs is also combined with fauna motifs (birds or fish), and vice versa. The effort to integrate and harmonize the two characters is a form of women's expression in interpreting the balance and harmony of life in this world. Reflection on the

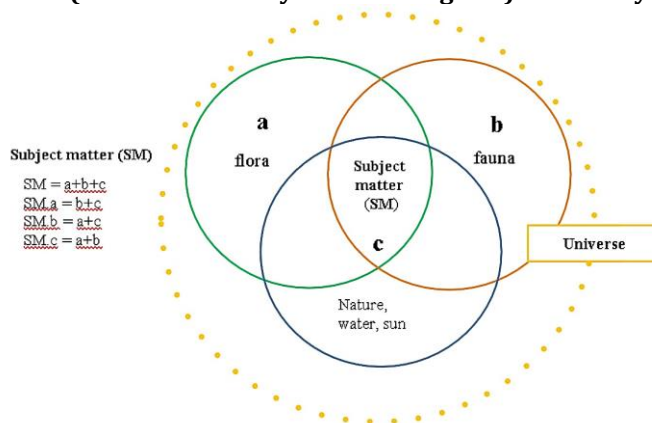
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<sup>6</sup> Music in Javanese Indramayu. They like Tarling music since it is considered a pop music from the Indramayu area whose songs touch the feelings of women on the Indramayu coast (Sulistyo, personal communication, May 8, 2020).

<sup>7</sup> From a cultural perspective, society has understood that the feminine belongs to women and the masculine belongs to men. If there are symptoms of behavior that deviate from these characteristics, it is considered a mistake or error in acting. Whereas feminine traits can be owned by anyone, including men. This has implications in the family, Feminine and masculine are jobs character in family (marriage). This means that there is a division of work tasks, who wants or can do what, and not who has to do what (Prabasmoro, 2007). There is a kind of challenge in women's feelings and thoughts about this patriarchal culture. The right to act as human beings in this world, both women and men are the same. Engels clearly criticized the institution of marriage as a form of oppression against women through the economic domination of men (Tong, 2008).

beauty of plants and animals that live in balance and harmony in this natural habitat characterizes the structure of Dermayon's decorative motifs.

**Figure 1. A Way to Depict Nature (Natural Harmony Pattern Diagram) in Dermayon Decorative Motifs.**



Source: Personal documentation.

Harmony of nature becomes their way of life, a view of life that comes from religion and the result of reflection (Hartoko, 1993). The contemplation of the Indramayu community has long been expressed in the batik media as a manifestation of symbolic interaction between humans and their environment, between humans and animals and plants and their environment (Toekio, 1987). This is found empirically in the Dermayon batik decorative motifs, which can be formulated as flora (a) + fauna (b) + nature (c) = subject matter (can be a, or b, or c). For example, this natural harmonization is expressed in the lasem urang (shrimp) motif.

Fish also inspiring the Dermayon's batik motifs. Coastal women generally view fish as a part of their lives for it is their daily food and commodity that is relied on in their fortunes as the catch of their husbands who make a living from fishermen. Fish are seen as creatures in the sea whose number and types are unlimited, created and provided by God for the benefit of human life (Sukri and Damin, personal communication, July 11, 2020). The sign of the fish motif on Dermayon batik means the prayers and hopes of coastal women in their survival. Another connotation of this fish shape is the expression of women's love for nature and the environment (Yin et al., 2020).

### 3.1.5. Expression of Freedom and Resistance

Other subject matter in Dermayon batik motifs are birds, such as the Ngibing Peacock, Berunding Peacock, Manuk Bengkuk, Cucak Rowo, and Cendrawasih motifs. Birds is always embellished by lines, and the shape of flowers or plants, as a sign of the natural harmonization. Not all of these birds live around them, that means not all crafter women have seen the animal directly. The idea of birds can appear in women's memories because it is related to domesticated birds brought by immigrant communities, or (oral) stories about birds. The idea of birds is developed based on their perception and interpretation related to the bird. Birds as creatures that can fly have connotations of freedom of life. Other meanings are related to the perception of spirituality and religiosity in the life of certain beliefs. Birds can also be interpreted as messengers of high power (Fontana, 1994; Moiseeva, 2020). The type of bird that is very beautiful and is widely used as the subject matter in batik motifs is the peacock. Peacocks biologically molt every year. This fur replacement is often interpreted as a renewal or a symbol of renewal (Hernowo et al., 2011).

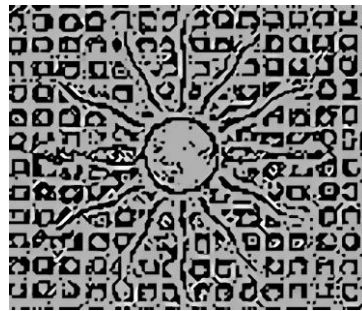
### 3.1.6. Expression of Freedom and Resistance

Expression of women in loving nature is not only limited to plants that are beautiful and beneficial for their lives, but also as their natural environment. such as soil, water and sunlight. All life on this earth is a harmony that needs to be grateful for. As expressed by a craftswoman.

Most of the decorative motifs on Indramayu batik are expressions of our gratitude to Allah SWT who has beautified the earth with all its benefits. As a woman who accepts all the provisions of God, we must be able to maintain this nature so that life is not in vain (Esih, personal communication, August 8, 2020).

The sun motif is generally a male symbol, and the moon is a female symbol (Fontana, 1994; Sekepe, 2020). Leaf plant motifs with smooth lines are interpreted as women, and the sun motif flanked by men. Circle marks generally symbolizing the sun and men are placed on the lines of the net. The "net" sign is interpreted as the world of work for men, women's husbands. The net is a tool for catching fish in the sea which is a tool for men's luck. The expression on this sun motif can be interpreted as a world apart between women on land – who faithfully await the return of their husbands who are at sea, because they are making a living as fishermen.

**Figure 1. Sun Motif.**



Source: Personal documentation.

### ***3.1.7. Expression of Beauty and Strength***

Carnation has the connotation of a force that supports the beauty of women and their tenderness (Frownfelter, 2010). The life picture of fisherwomen is a real portrait of the gender system in coastal culture, as stated by Kusnadi below:

The gender system is a system of sexual division of labor in fishing communities based on existing cultural perceptions. In other words, the gender system is a social construction of a fishing community that is formed as an evolutionary result of a dialectical process between humans, the environment, and their culture. As a cultural product, the gender system is passed down socially from generation to generation (Kusnadi, 2001, p. 12 ).

Women's support for the family in everyday life is a form of women's responsibilities as parents, starting from taking care of children, taking care of the house, to looking for additional income. The area of the house on "land" is a woman's business, and the "sea" is a man's business (Kusnadi, 2001). This causes two poles of work in the family that have existed for a long time in the coastal culture of Indramayu, so that women must have physical and mental strength as well as men (Kusumasari, 2013). The power to stand alone, for example, belongs to Carwati (36 years old), the owner of the Senang Hati Batik company. The daughter of a crafter woman batik is the successor to her family's batik business. He thought and worked hard to be able to continue this batik tradition through developing his business. This company works have depicted their creativity and business independence.

In this global era and today's tough economic life, job choices are no longer possible to be determined based on the concept of gender segregation of work. To develop cultural life, it would be more appropriate if it was chosen and determined based on the potential of the individual concerned, both for women and men (Cohen, 2001). For example, in traditional batik activities, women's potential has been played well since ancient times, because their feminine nature is very supportive in the batik writing process which requires subtlety, thoroughness and patience. In the current development of the batik craft industry, there are other jobs that do not require subtleties, such as fabric processing, dyeing,

and waxing,<sup>8</sup> usually left to men with masculine traits. The role of men is considered as a helper, not the main role in producing batik.

### ***3.1.8. Message of Tourism and Love for the Region***

Besides being famous for its mango fruit, in Indramayu many petai trees thrive. Crafter women interested in expressing this plant with its flower, which they call the petai flower. The expression of women in this motif means that there is an appreciative attitude towards the environment, while many people only take advantage of something valuable out of it. Women as part of the coastal community respond to the existence of nature as a whole that has a balance. A senior crafter woman, Wanginih (personal communication, April 27, 2020) says that in the universe created by God is nothing useless, and nothing is worse. He also explained that people only pay attention to the fruit without paying attention to the flowers, while all flowers are symbols of beauty (Suwena and Robika, personal communication, June 8, 2020). Creativity in describing this motif can also be interpreted as a form of expression of love for the region itself or pride in its potential.

### ***3.1.9. Message of Love for the Environment***

The Concern of crafter women towards the natural environment grows on their own consciousness. The presence of nature and humans is a unity. The message from their parents, as stated by a crafter woman, Kutiah (personal communication, April 19, 2020), is that protecting the natural environment is borne by women on land since husbands mostly live in the sea (as fishermen). Likewise, as Tarsinih said (personal communication, April 19, 2020), it has been ordered to take care of plants since childhood, planting trees in front of the house, both fruit and vegetable plants. This is not just a talk, because according to observations, almost every house in Paoman is shaded by shady trees. Their care and concern on land is expressed through motif jati rombeng, while kembang karang motif expresses the message of the natural environment in the ocean. Kembang karang motifs will not be found in Tasikmalaya, Garut and Ciamis batiks, because those who understand coastal life are of course the people living in the coastal areas.

### ***3.1.10. Expression of Sadness of Women***

People in the coastal area of Indramayu, especially in Paoman, have a different life cycle from that in mountainous areas. Men consisting of husbands or teenagers as fishermen use a lot of their time to go to sea. The children and wife are left temporarily for one or two months for fishing in big boats. Or one to two weeks for fishing using medium boats. In their solitude, women carry out their activities as housewives and heads of families (temporarily). In addition to taking care of the house and taking care of their children, they also trade food, sell batik, process sea fish for resale, and some are batik-crafter women (Ratuannisa et al., 2020). Basically, they work to fill their spare time, but now it is a side job that supports their husband's livelihood. Paoman women are required to help their husbands economically, they may make money without interfering with their functions as housewives (Susanti, 2019).

Women who work batik crafter continue their parents' tradition. They make batik not only to gain profit, but also to maintain the local tradition, just as their mother or grandmother had done. Usually, their mothers or grandmothers who have passed away leave a few pieces of batik cloth to their daughters, not for sale, but as a memory to be stored and preserved, or used at any time, especially at wedding ceremonies or related to customs. Their parents not only continued the tradition of batik but also conveyed meaningful messages (in the form of pictures/motifs, colours, lines and shapes) to the next generation. Female ancestors convey messages through images on batik cloth with the influence of emotional conditions, nature and the surrounding environment, as well as relationships with others including comers. These influences include the natural conditions of the sea and/or about the occurrence of ships, such as the Obar-abir motif and kapal kandas motif.

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<sup>8</sup> Pelorodan (Javanese) which means the process of removing batik wax by boiling a cloth that has been painted with wax and dyed in boiling water mixed with soda ash until the wax melted away.







### 3.2. Cultural, Aesthetic and Semiotic Equivalent Relations in Dermayon Motifs

In order to develop a comprehensive understanding, it is necessary to describe the equivalent relations of the aesthetic and semiotic analysis of Dermayon motifs associated with the cultural phenomena of coastal women. The author presents twelve motifs from thirty motifs.

**Table 1. Cultural, Aesthetic and Semiotic Equivalent Relations on Dermayon Motifs (Flora and Fauna)**

Dermayon Motif & Matter	CULTURE (Coastal Women)	AESTHETIC (Code & Visual)	SEMIOTICS (Coded Meaning)	
			Denotative	Connotative
<p><b>Beras Ketumplek</b></p>  <p>Rice (beras) which is sufficient to meet the basic needs of people</p>	<p>Rice synonymous with the kitchen and women. Gender division of labor between men and women: rice is women's business on the mainland.</p>	<p>Stylized rice stalks and leaves, and animals, on a white dotted background as rice grains code. Dark background color and light motif, with composition <i>disordered</i>.</p>	<p>The white dots are represented as grains of rice (staple food) for coastal communities as the main food needs.</p>	<p>Women play a role in preparing food needs for the family, especially rice as a main food.</p>
<p><b>Ganggeng</b></p>  <p>Wild plants in waters and swamps</p>	<p>Women have a free attitude, and are brave in making life choices because of their responsibilities in managing family life.</p>	<p>The stylization is patterned with gyre motifs (curves that spread) which are lined with fine line. Dark background and light motifs. Regular composition with the impression of twisted lines that move in all directions and solid.</p>	<p>Decorative motifs developed from the idea of wild plant forms of algae (<i>gannggeng</i>) that live in fresh or marine waters, as well as in swamps.</p>	<p>The expression of the freedom of society (women) in managing their lives, because women are dominant in the family.</p>
<p><b>Kembang Betah</b></p>  <p>Plants that usually adorn the cemetery.</p>	<p>Women in the belief system believe in the end of death and make every element of nature a part of beauty.</p>	<p>The stylization of flower plants is depicted through the shape of stems, leaves and flowers, with snaking and spiraling lines. The composition is irregular, moves in all directions, is dynamic, and has an expressive impression.</p>	<p>Plants that spread freely, with curved stems, which are depicted by spiral lines and seem to blend together with one another.</p>	<p>The attention and pleasure of craftsmen in revealing the plants are not only the beautiful flowers in the garden, but also the flowers that grow in the cemetery. This shows that people pay attention to something that "as if" is not important to be valuable. A cemetery is a garden that is also aesthetically expressed.</p>
<p><b>Kembang Karang</b></p> 	<p>Women pay attention to the lives of all marine biota, including coral reefs that grow on the seabed, and take care of them for the sake</p>	<p>The idea of a coral flower is processed by stylizing flowers and leaves with a symmetrical pattern, which is repeated in an orderly and dense composition. The lines used are short and straight, especially as <i>isen-isen</i> that fills</p>	<p>Plants that live on the seabed. The shape is irregular, but plays a role in maintaining the balance of marine life.</p>	<p>Coastal communities not only take fish from the sea for their life, but also pay attention to the natural environment which plays an</p>

<p>Life of biota on the seabed that is often overlooked by humans, namely coral reefs (<i>kembang karang</i>).</p>	<p>of sustainability and balance.</p>	<p>the background. The color of the motif is blue and yellow, or red, on a light (white) background.</p>	<p>important role in their survival.</p>
<p><b>Kembang Kol</b></p>  <p>Food ingredients in the form of vegetables are widely consumed in processed <i>capcay</i> food.</p>	<p>Together in social life is a tradition, including immigrants from different nationalities (eg China).</p>	<p>Stylized cauliflower (<i>kembang kol</i>) arranged in groups and regularly, against a background of leaves and flowers. Symmetrical balance in the main motif and repeated in other spaces regularly with small curved lines. Bright red background color with white, blue and yellow motifs.</p>	<p>Cauliflower as a vegetable plant that has long been used by the community in making nutritious food. In terms of form composition, this motif means togetherness, unity, even in diversity. The red color in the background of the motif means joy.</p>
<p><b>Kembang Suket</b></p>  <p>Wild life in grass plants that live around the house</p>	<p>There is an awareness of women as a wild fringe community and is considered a lower class that has its own norms of freedom.</p>	<p>Stylized flower suket (<i>kembang suket</i>) which is patterned regularly and in a dense composition.</p>	<p>A type of weed that grows around the yard. The leaves are elongated and the flowers are small. This grass is not deliberately planted and nurtured, but finely grow. This motif choice is often likened to a group of people who are marginalized from the attention of other people. <i>Kembang suket</i> is also interpreted as a lower-class society.</p>
<p><b>Kembang Pete</b></p>  <p>The beauty of flowers in a petai plant. Petai flowers (<i>kembang pete</i>) are often forgotten since only the fruit is eaten.</p>	<p>Women think that beauty is in every living thing, including Pete. Efforts to lift something valuable from the hidden.</p>	<p>The stylized flower has many angles, resembling the shape of a star, leaves, twigs, and petai. Light background colors and motifs tend to be dark. The composition is irregular, dense, and has a dynamic impression.</p>	<p>Flowers that appear when the petai tree is about to bear fruit. Petai fruit in the form of legumes as a vegetable with a distinctive smell. For some people, petai is a vegetable (<i>lalaban</i>) that complements the food menu. Petai means beauty that is often forgotten by many people. Beauty is not from the outer shape and color, but from the individual taste of the petai. There is an expression says "although it smells but good"</p>
<p><b>Sekar Niem</b></p>  <p><i>Kembang</i> (plants) as one of the media in the boat descending ceremony</p>	<p>Syncretism in the belief system of coastal communities is still maintained in some cultural activities of the community, especially those related to traditional</p>	<p>The Stylization of the leaves and flowers of <i>sekar niem</i>, with a peculiarity in the fine lines on the surface of the leaves and flowers. The combination of blue, red, and white background adorns the batik cloth</p>	<p>Small plants around the fisherman's yard. This plant is used by some people as a complementary boat ceremony to go to sea or as a The fishing community's belief in the seven kinds of flowers or flowers does not always have to come from a group of flowers that are beautiful and fragrant, such as jasmine, rose or rose. People believe that the most important</p>

(complement of offerings)	ceremonies as their ancestral heritage. This can be seen in the "offerings" of seven kinds of flowers or sekar niem on the eve of certain ceremonies (Yudoseputro, 1993).	with dense and irregular compositions.	complement to the seven kinds of flower offerings.	thing is the difference between the seven kinds of flowers that grow around them. This means that in carrying out traditional cultural ceremonies, it must still be based on simple patterns, something that is taken from around one's own life.
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**Jati Rombeng**



Markers of damage or pests on teak (*jati*) trees are yellowish and dry leaves. Description of natural damage (forest)

The technology system for housing from teak wood is still partially maintained in the construction of houses, but deforestation is not indiscriminate, there is a cycle. Therefore, the community is concerned about illegal logging or forest destruction due to greediness.

Stylized leaves form elongated, jagged and branches filled with flowers and small twigs. The dominant colors are red, yellow and a light background. Curved lines become the dominant medium, with a dense and irregular composition. There is the impression of dynamic motion in all directions.

Description of teak trees damaged due to long drought and/or pests. This motif depicts the leaves and stems that are yellowish and not intact.

Expressions of society in reflecting on natural phenomena around them. The teak tree is a sign of strength because of its age and use value to support housing needs. The environmental message through this motif is a public concern for forest maintenance and illegal logging.

**Teluki**



The beauty of wild plants that are strong and beautiful

Teluki symbolizes the character of coastal women who have strength and perseverance in facing life.

The stylized form of the bay plant consists of a series of branches, leaves and red flowers. The background is light (white) and the leaf motif is dark blue. Solid composition and irregular vertical This motif is dominated by curved lines.

Wild plants such as grass that live around brackish fish ponds on the beach.

Teluki means the beauty (women) of the coast that is sturdy and strong. This meaning is related to the depiction of a large and upright bay stem. The power of women is clearly expressed through a firm line, erect, but slightly contorted.

**Cucak Rowo**



The beauty of birds chirping sweetly

Coastal women are free in character in speaking, dare to be frank or reveal facts realistically. In everyday language use there is no known language hierarchy. The sound of birds chirping indirectly is a reflection of the

Stylized long-necked and tailed bird on a background of leaves and twigs. Short lines fill the background (*isen-isen*) with a rhythm that follows the stylized curve of the main motif. White or light background color with dark motifs (brown, blue, or red). The graceful rhythm of the bird's style gives the impression of rhythmic motion.

This bird has a beautiful chirping sound, beautiful feathers and a long tail.

This bird is an expression of love for the beauty of nature and its environment. Birds for some people mean freedom or independence. There was a longing and hope during the colonial period to be able to immediately

	“crowd” in dialogue or speech.			enjoy the free nature.
<b>Merak Ngibing</b>	Thanking to God has always been the attitude and behavior of women in accepting life's destiny. Belief in the blessings of life that comes from God must always be thanked. From its historical background, decorative motifs originate from the attitude of people's joy in winning a war during the colonial era (Dekranasda, 2007:23, Kasim, interview, 6 June 2020).	Repetitive stylization of peacocks and plants in bright red tones on a white background. Curved lines are used to form bird patterns, giving the impression of motion. The main motif is two birds facing each other in an asymmetrical composition. Light colored background (white or yellow) with small stylized isen plants.	Like the peacock ( <i>merak</i> ) motif, the merak ngibing motif refers to the beautiful peacock bird. The difference lies in the composition and representation of the form. The ngibing peacock motif depicts peacocks flapping their wings and tails in dynamic motion, facing each other.	The ngibing peacock motif is a form of expression of joy or happiness. This can be observed from the arrangement and processing of the bird's shape, its wings and tail expand and the impression of motion. The motion or direction of the dynamic line and the red color in the motif can be interpreted as joy. If it is associated with the phenomenon at the time of its creation, this motif is an expression of feelings of joy because the people get a coveted goal.



*Ngibing* or dancing is an expression of joy for an event that is immortalized through the merak ngibing motif.

Source: Personal documentation.

#### 4. Conclusion

The role of women in the coastal culture of Indramayu is illustrated in the signs and forms of expression in the various decorative motifs of Dermayon. Likewise, the position of women in families and coastal communities shows gender equality between men and women. The view of life "men at sea and women on land" means that there is an equal division of duties and responsibilities between husband and wife in fishing families. Women or wives are responsible for taking care of household life, including managing the house, educating their children, and managing all the necessities of life. Men are responsible for making a living at sea by catching fish to support their families. In the context of gender equality, it is evident that in fishermen's families there is no higher or lower position between men and women. Women who work on batik in home businesses (nguli<sup>9</sup> or ngobeng<sup>10</sup>) still reasoned "to fill spare time" not as a profession even it is profitable for their daily needs. Batik knowledge and skills possessed by the Paoman women are the result of family education (informal) which is inherited from their parents for generations.

The Dermayon batik motif depicts signs, messages, and encoded meanings as a form of female expression in the cultural context of the Indramayu coast. Based on the analysis of the subject matter and the pattern of forms of expression, the content of the Dermayon motif has a coded meaning as: a reflection of coastal cultural life; the expression of marginalized people; expression of freedom and openness; togetherness in life; expressions of cultural resistance; expression of beauty, strength, and independence; and women who have loyalty or determination. Dozens of motifs always depict the harmonization of nature, both flora and fauna in a single composition, since the people of Indramayu have attitudes and views of life about love of nature environment.

<sup>9</sup> Work regularly for a batik entrepreneur.

<sup>10</sup> Doing other people's work at home.

Based on this research result, it can be formulated further research plans, including: (1) Study of Dermayon batik or similar coastal batik by utilizing sociological and economic discipline approaches; (2) Study of dynamics and changes in women's expression in Dermayon batik; (3) Study of the history (historiography) of Dermayon batik with a focus on batik motifs that have symptoms of a subject matter connection with the colonial period movement (or the creation of motifs during the independence restoration; (4) Study of signs and encoded meanings of the motifs with the subject matter of coastal flora or fauna in the context of environmental conservation.

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